



Question: What's an atheist?

Answer: A person with no invisible means of support.

## What Do You Mean - "Are You Good Enough"?

Read on

**“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness,  
and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matt 6:33)**

One of the most potent one-liners in the Bible.  
Can you spare 5 minutes? - please read on.

The above passage of Scripture contains an inference that; 'If you get the first bit right the rest will follow'. While this passage of Scripture primarily addresses the question of our concern about survival (*food, clothing, shelter and health etc.*) it also addresses the very fundamental concern; - "am I really a Christian?". To qualify as a Christian, do I have to possess great knowledge of the Scriptures, attend church frequently – make sacrifices to help the needy, and, be free of all sin etc? Do I possess the right intent and do I obey God's commandments well enough? Can I pass the test? Am I worthy? Am I good enough? -

Many are often left with lingering doubts concerning these fundamental questions;  
“What must I do?”, that is, "what must I achieve in order to be accepted?”

I suspect that many people who attend church regularly wrestle with this consideration and that some may harbour a sense of inadequacy, uncertainty and serious concern.

**The word ‘achieve’ is an apt word, for the answer to this question  
“what must I achieve” – is nothing**

We don't have to achieve anything - we only have to try.  
We only have to seek - as written in Matthew's gospel.

Note the use of the word “Seek” in this passage. The Macquarie dictionary defines the word “Seek”<sup>1</sup> as; *“to try to find by searching”, or, “endeavour”*.

Many have the concept that to become a Christian requires absolute obedience and compliance. We all realise that such a level of perfection is not achievable<sup>2</sup> and subsequently, I believe that a repentant<sup>3</sup> heart and an earnest endeavour is all that is required to "become a Christian".

If you 'qualify' as outlined above, then you will sense a new found desire to acquaint yourself<sup>4</sup> with, and to listen to, God's Will<sup>5</sup>. The simple and fundamental requirement of us all is that we need to have an earnest endeavour of the heart. We must realise that an earnest endeavour of the heart first requires – a repentant heart. There are no compromises available here – you either have a repentant heart or you don't<sup>6</sup>.

If you are genuine in your desire to know God, then you will automatically accept God in your life. You will no longer feel 'obliged' to be compliant - rather, you will want to be obedient to God's Will - you will have a desire to do His Will.

- and you will then find peace -

Now, what Scripture supports this view (?) – that is, the view that we don't have to succeed – that we only have to try – that we only need to be sincere and to have the right intent – that is, "to repent and have faith".

In the book of Romans, the disciple Paul points out the futility of any attempt to earn 'acceptance' by trying to be 'perfect'. To quote;

"As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one." (*Rom 3:10*)

The commentary on this verse (*Rom 3:10*) indicates that God, through the inspired writings of Paul was referring to the Jews and the Gentiles, that is, he was referring to the whole of mankind ..... "there is none righteous, no not one".

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

Romans 3:20 "Therefore, no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin." (*NIV*)

This last verse (3:20) indicates a foregone conclusion that no one would be capable of fully adhering to the law and that the law only serves to identify and show up our failure to comply.

There are many passages in the Bible that refer to being saved by grace not by deeds; For example;

Eph 2:8 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, .....

Romans 4:5 "However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness." (*NIV*)

The Contemporary English Version of the Bible makes this same verse very plain and clear, -- to quote the same passage immediately below;

Romans 4:5 "But you cannot make God accept you because of something you do. God accepts sinners only because they have faith in him." (*CEV*)

The Scriptures make it quite clear that we could never qualify as a Christian if it depended on "how good" or "how righteous we were" - or on how much good (good works) we have performed".

What about being saved by faith alone - is this possible? The criminal on the cross alongside Jesus was saved by faith alone, as we shall see in a moment. (*Note however, that this criminal may not have known any detail of Jesus' teachings.*)

At first, the two, related considerations of "faith" and "good works" present a dilemma. We acknowledge on the one hand that good works alone does not get you into heaven, but something tells us that faith alone without good works won't either.

To quote extracts from an article by Michael Bremmer;

"The relationship is that faith is the cause of good works and good works are the effect of faith. We do not do "good works" to merit God's grace, but we do good works because we have received the grace of God. The 'good works' we do are from a heart that has been radically changed by the grace of God. This is what James had in mind, when, he wrote;

"But someone may well say, you have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works" (*James 2:18*). For James, salvation is impossible without good works because good works are the evidence of a true living faith." (*End of Michael Bremmer's quote*)

The account in Luke's Gospel about the repentant criminal who was crucified alongside Jesus and who Jesus forgave, is not in conflict with the above reference to good works - for had this criminal gone on to live, after repenting, his true faith would have been evidenced by good works. (*Refer following passage*)

Luke 23:39-43 (note; there were two convicted criminals crucified at the same time, alongside Jesus)

39 "One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence?

41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." (NIV)

Isn't this a classic example of "it's never too late" --- it doesn't matter at all about your life up to this moment in time --- "it's never too late to turn to God". The dying criminal, hanging on the cross alongside Jesus, with his last breath was repentant, turning to Jesus and asking for and being granted forgiveness and acceptance.

**No, you don't have to achieve anything - you only have to repent<sup>3</sup> and have an earnest endeavour of the heart - and to enable you to do this;  
"Seek<sup>1</sup> ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness;  
and all these things shall be added unto you."**



If you don't find the above controversial, then have a look at this.

I believe that we (*all mankind*) are born into sin and it is only through the recognition of and the obedience to God's Will that we are able to rise above. I believe that our survival instinct harbours our 'selfishness' and 'greed' (*look how puppies trample each other to get to the mother's milk, perhaps in some cases depriving their weaker siblings of survival*).

The fundamental concept of the Christian doctrine portrays a 'communal' type society where the basics of equality are formed by sharing and helping. This concept appears to be in direct conflict with Western Capitalism (*the environment in which the advancement of science and technology is seen to thrive*).

Capitalism<sup>7</sup> is a 'dirty word' to many people. However, if we were to remove 'reward for effort', (*which includes financial risk taking*) which is so obviously manifest in our capitalistic and materialistic world to-day, we would dampen, and in some cases remove entrepreneurial initiatives - (*why take the risk and why bust your gut if there are to be no material rewards?*).

It is conceivable that many wonderful technological tools and products that have evolved, during the last 140 years in particular, would still be way off if material rewards were non-existent. However, many modern facilities would be here to-day, even so, as many 'inventors' are driven by a passion rather than reward, - but, the advancement of many sophisticated new ideas requires huge investment capital - where does the capital come from (?) - it comes from people expecting to get a return on their investment, that is, they expect to be rewarded, especially as the outlay would involve some risk to their funds. The greater the reward, the greater the investment capital is likely to be forthcoming to a developer, - is this greed?

Extract from an article by Eric R. Pianka © "Can Human Instincts Be Controlled?"

Like all animals, humans have instincts, hard-wired behaviors that enhance our ability to cope with vital environmental contingencies. Our innate fear of snakes is an example. Two other instincts, greed and our urge to procreate, now threaten our very existence. Any attempt to control human behavior is bound to meet with resistance and disapproval. Unless we can change our behavior, humans are facing the end of civilization. Our problem has several elements.

- (1) We have invented social systems that encourage greedy behavior, and we have actually institutionalized runaway greed.
- (2) We are in a state of complete denial about the growth of human populations.
- (3) Earth's finite resources simply cannot support 6.7+ billion of us in the style to which we'd like to live.
- (4) We must make a choice between quantity and quality of human life.
- (5) To head off the inevitable collapse, we can no longer wait and merely react but we must become proactive. We must find ways to control dangerous human instincts, especially our greed and our urge to procreate<sup>8</sup>. *(End of Eric R. Pianka's quote)*

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~ The answers to these and all of life's problems can be found in the Scriptures ~

<http://www.biblequestions.org/>

<http://creationontheweb.com/>

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Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> **'Seek'** - "to try to find by searching" or, "endeavour". *(Macquarie Dictionary)*

<sup>2</sup> (perfection is not achievable) "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one." *(Rom 3:10)*

<sup>3</sup> **'Repent'** - **'Repentant'** - "To make a change for the better as a result of remorse or contrition for one's sins." *(Farlex Dictionary)*

<sup>4</sup> The Holy Bible.

<sup>5</sup> You might like to start by reading The 10 Commandments - (Exodus 20:2-17 & Deuteronomy 5:6-21). You won't succeed *in keeping all the commandments all the time (you will see a little further on in this article where Paul tells us so, in Romans 3:10)* but that's not the point. The point is that you will have a desire to succeed and you will attempt to succeed - you will want to make an "earnest endeavour".

<sup>6</sup> As in "you can't be a little bit pregnant - you either are or you are not!  
*(Note subtle definitive above for <sup>3</sup> Farlex Dictionary: "Repent" - "Repentant"; make a change, that is, not simply try and make a change. This must be achieved.*

<sup>7</sup> **'Capitalism'** - is an economic system in which wealth, and the means of producing wealth, are privately owned and controlled rather than commonly, publicly, or state-owned and controlled. *(Wikipedia)*

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<sup>8</sup> My comment on Eric R Pianka's article, (paragraph immediately above 'Footnotes'). Eric R Pianka's article endorses my earlier comments about our vulnerability to sin because of our "natural instincts". His article highlights two most crucial considerations ("greed" and "our urge to procreate"). Notwithstanding his reference to "world overpopulation", we can see that 'greed', (allied with selfishness) would enhance an individual's prospects of survival, and 'the urge to procreate' is essential to ensure propagation of the species. So, it comes as no surprise to recognise the potency of these two particular instincts. (Look at how we mismanage the excesses with regard to obesity and sexual assault.)